

CONSUMER PROTECTION

PROGRAM:

 Consumer Protection^a
PROGRAM ELEMENT:
PROGRAM MISSION:

To investigate and attempt to resolve consumer complaints concerning home sales, improvements, and mortgages; automobile sales and repairs; and other merchants and service providers in a manner that is both timely and fair

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES SUPPORTED:

- Maintain a marketplace that is fair to all parties, including consumers, merchants, landlords, tenants, homeowners, and their governing boards
- Foster respect for the law
- Provide responsive government
- Promote a positive business climate

PROGRAM MEASURES

	FY03 ACTUAL	FY04 ACTUAL	FY05 ACTUAL	FY06 BUDGET	FY07 CE REC
Outcomes/Results:					
Estimated total restitution to consumers (\$000) ^b	1,045	854	1,708	1,100	1,300
Service Quality:					
Percentage of complainants satisfied with:					
- The way in which the complaint was handled	92	89	93	88	88
- The outcome from filing the complaint	82	75	83	80	80
Efficiency:					
Service units ^c completed per workyear	1,681	1,707	1,870	1,715	1,890
Average cost per service unit ^c completed (\$)	64.62	58.40	54.18	63.45	76.98
Volunteer hours contributed	4,244	2,829	5,518	3,000	3,800
Workload/Outputs:					
Consumer complaints closed ^d	2,529	2,524	2,250	2,550	2,600
Information calls answered	23,270	26,277	29,659	26,000	26,000
Disclosures ^e	6,468	5,854	5,482	5,400	5,200
Total service units provided ^c	32,267	34,655	37,391	33,950	33,800
Inputs:					
Expenditures (\$000) ^a	2,085	2,024	2,026	2,154	2,602
Workyears ^a	19.2	20.3	20.0	19.8	24.3

Notes:

^aThrough the end of FY05, the Child Safety Seat portion of the Consumer Protection program - and the associated resources - were reported in a separate display. Starting in FY06, the Child Safety Seat program has been transferred to the Fire and Rescue Service, so the FY06 and FY07 expenditures and workyears reported here reflect the entire Consumer Protection program.

^bEstimated total value of refunds, service performed, or financial relief received by the consumer for which Office of Consumer Protection assistance contributed significantly to the outcome.

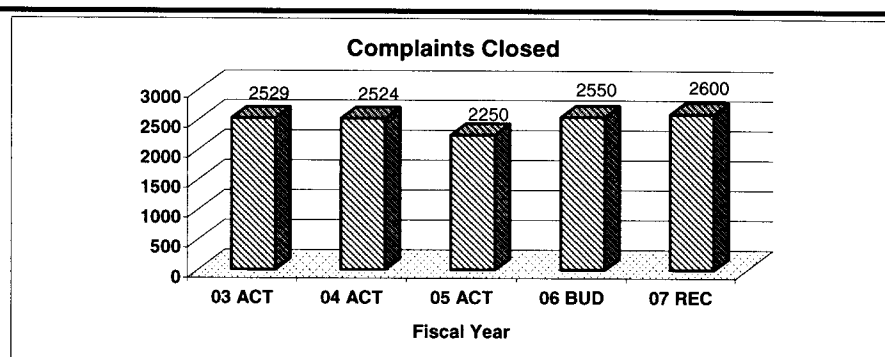
^cService units equal complaints plus requests for information plus disclosures.

^dExcludes large class type settlements, which could inflate and distort the number of cases.

^eDisclosures are responses to calls from consumers asking if there have been any complaints about a given merchant.

EXPLANATION:

FY06 is the first full year of operation for the Office of Consumer Protection, which was formerly part of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs. The Consumer Protection Program ensures that a fair and competitive marketplace is maintained within Montgomery County so that consumers are protected from unfair and deceptive business practices, and responsible businesses are allowed to operate free from unfair competition.



PROGRAM PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF OUTCOMES: County Attorney, District Court, Maryland Attorney General's Office, Federal Trade Commission, Better Business Bureau, U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

MAJOR RELATED PLANS AND GUIDELINES: Maryland Annotated Code, Montgomery County Code, Federal laws and regulations.